IN THE CLAIMS:

1.   (Currently Amended) A method for classifying vertically partitioned data comprising:

categorizing subsets of classifiers for the partitioned data;

determining class labels for a data pattern of the partitioned data for which the subsets of classifiers are consistent;

estimating posterior probabilities for the class labels of consistent classifier subsets;

approximating the <u>overall</u> posterior probability of the partitioned data based upon the estimated posterior probabilities of the consistent classifier subsets; ~~and~~

determining the mutual consistency of each classifier with respect to the other classifiers in a classifier subset<u>;</u>

<u>producing a combined classification based upon said overall posterior probability; and</u>

<u>outputting said combined classification to classify said vertically partitioned data.</u>

2.   (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 1, ~~all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference,~~ further comprising using a predetermined consistency condition for a classifier with respect to other classifiers.

3.   (Cancelled).

4.   (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 1, ~~all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference,~~ wherein the posterior probability is approximated from the estimated posterior probabilities using a Bayesian framework.

5.   (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 1, ~~all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference,~~ wherein the class label is selected for test data for which a combined posterior probability is maximum.

6.   (Currently Amended) A computer program product <u>comprising a computer-readable</u> <u>medium storing instructions executable by a computer</u> for classifying partitioned data <u>in a</u> <u>method</u> comprising ~~computer software recorded on a computer-readable medium for performing~~:

     categorizing subsets of classifiers for the partitioned data;

     determining class labels for a data pattern of the partitioned data for which the subsets of classifiers are consistent;

     estimating posterior probabilities for the class labels of consistent classifier subsets;

     approximating the<u> overall</u> posterior probability of the partitioned data based upon the estimated posterior probabilities of the consistent classifier subsets; ~~and~~

     determining the mutual consistency of each classifier with respect to the other classifiers in a classifier subset<u>;</u>

     <u>producing a combined classification based upon said overall posterior probability; and</u>

     <u>outputting said combined classification to classify said vertically partitioned data.</u>

7.   (Currently Amended) A computer system <u>comprising a computer-readable medium</u> <u>storing computer software code means instructions executable by a computer</u> for classifying partitioned data ~~comprising computer software recorded on a computer-readable medium for said~~ ~~computer system~~ comprising:

     computer software code means for categorizing subsets of classifiers for the partitioned data;

     computer software code means for determining class labels for a data pattern of the partitioned data for which the classifier subsets are consistent;

     computer software code means for estimating posterior probabilities for the class labels of consistent classifier subsets;

     computer software code means for approximating the <u>overall</u> posterior probability of the partitioned data based upon the estimated posterior probabilities of the consistent classifier subsets; ~~and~~

     computer software code means for determining the mutual consistency of each classifier with respect to the other classifiers in a classifier subset<u>;</u>

computer software code means for producing a combined classification based upon said overall posterior probability; and

computer software code means for outputting said combined classification to classify said vertically partitioned data.

8. (Currently Amended) The computer program product as claimed in claim 6, ~~all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference,~~ further comprising using a predetermined consistency condition for a classifier with respect to other classifiers.

9. (Cancelled).

10. (Currently Amended) The computer program product as claimed in claim 6, ~~all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference,~~ wherein the posterior probability is approximated from the estimated posterior probabilities using a Bayesian framework.

11. (Currently Amended) The computer program product as claimed in claim 6, ~~all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference,~~ wherein the class label is selected for test data for which a combined posterior probability is maximum.

12. (Currently Amended) The computer system as claimed in claim 7, ~~all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference,~~ further comprising computer software code means for using a predetermined consistency condition for a classifier with respect to other classifiers.

13. (Cancelled).

14. (Currently Amended) The computer system as claimed in claim 7, ~~all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference,~~ wherein the posterior probability is approximated from the estimated posterior probabilities using a Bayesian framework.

15.　　　(Currently Amended) The computer system as claimed in claim 7, ~~all the limitations of which are incorporated herein by reference,~~ wherein the class label is selected for test data for which a combined posterior probability is maximum.